

Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



(11) **EP 1 347 076 A1**

(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

(43) Date of publication:
24.09.2003 Bulletin 2003/39

(51) Int Cl.7: **C23C 14/14, C23C 14/06,
B23B 27/14, C22C 29/06,
C23C 16/34, C23C 30/00**

(21) Application number: **03005967.9**

(22) Date of filing: **18.03.2003**

(84) Designated Contracting States:
**AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR
HU IE IT LI LU MC NL PT RO SE SI SK TR**
Designated Extension States:
AL LT LV MK RO

(72) Inventors:
• **Larsson, Andreas**
73747 Fagersta (SE)
• **Sulin, Anette**
73743 Fagersta (SE)
• **Sjöln, Jacob**
73741 Fagersta (SE)

(30) Priority: **20.03.2002 SE 0200871**

(71) Applicant: **SECO TOOLS AB**
S-737 82 Fagersta (SE)

(74) Representative: **Taquist, Lennart**
SECO TOOLS AB
732 82 FAGERSTA (SE)

(54) **PVD-Coated cutting tool insert**

(57) The present invention relates to a coated cemented carbide insert (cutting tool), particularly useful for milling at high cutting speeds in alloyed steels, tool steels and milling in hardened steels. The inserts are

characterised by a WC-Co cemented carbide containing NbC and TaC and a W-alloyed binder phase and a coating including an inner layer of Ti_xAl_yN , $0.8 \leq x+y \leq 1.2$, with $0.25 \leq x/y \leq 1.45$, with columnar grains.

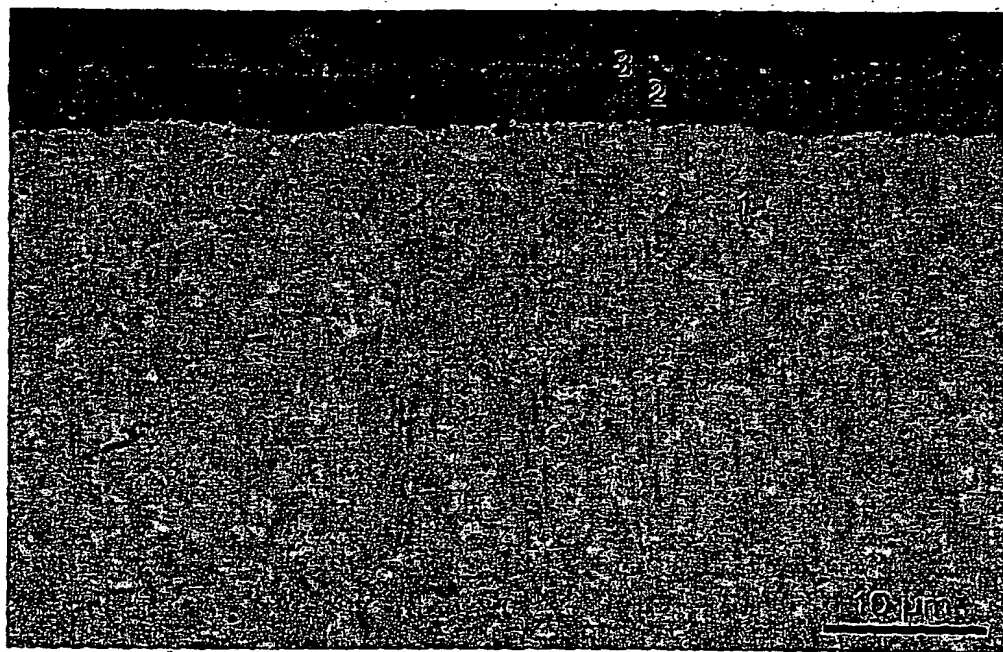


FIG. 1

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

EP 1 347 076 A1

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a coated cemented carbide insert (cutting tool), particularly useful for milling at high cutting speeds in alloyed steels, tool steels and milling in hardened steels.

[0002] During machining of steels, stainless steels and cast irons with coated cemented carbide tools, the cutting edges are worn according to different wear mechanisms, such as chemical wear, abrasive wear and adhesive wear. At high cutting speeds, the amount of heat generated in the cutting zone is considerable and a plastic deformation of the cutting edge may occur, which in turn yields an enhanced wear by other mechanisms. When milling alloyed steels adhesive wear is often pronounced and edge chipping occurs frequently as a consequence of delamination or cracking of the protective coating.

[0003] The cutting performance with respect to specific wear types can be improved by single actions, however, very often this will have a negative effect on other wear properties. Consequently, successful tool composite materials must be designed as careful optimizations of numerous properties. In the case of milling of alloyed steels and tool steels, often in a hardened state, one important balance is that between the plastic deformation resistance of the cutting edge and the edge chipping resistance. A simple measure to increase the resistance to plastic deformation and also the abrasive wear resistance is to lower the binder phase content. However, this will also diminish the toughness of the cutting insert, which can substantially lower the tool life in applications where vibrations or the presence of casting or forging skin put demands on such properties. An alternative way to increase the deformation resistance is to add cubic carbides like TiC, TaC and/or NbC. However, this addition has a negative influence on edge chipping tendencies and so called comb crack formation. The constitution of the applied wear resistant surface coating is a key factor in the properties of the tool. Thicker and more wear resistant coatings are often applied by the chemical vapor deposition (CVD) method. These coatings often also improves the plastic deformation resistance but can to larger extent impair edge toughness. Coatings produced by physical vapor deposition (PVD), which are often thinner, do not provide as good protection against heat and plastic deformation but give very good edge integrity and consequently shows good protection against edge chipping.

[0004] To improve all tool properties simultaneously is obviously very difficult and numerous properties of both the protective coating and the cemented carbide substrate and the combination thereof have to be considered. Consequently, commercial coated cemented carbide grades have usually been optimized with respect to one or a few wear types. This also means that they have been optimized for specific application areas.

[0005] US 6,062,776 discloses a coated cutting insert particularly useful for milling of low and medium alloyed steels and stainless steels with raw surfaces such as cast skin, forged skin, hot or cold rolled skin or pre-machined surfaces under unstable conditions. The insert is characterized by a WC-Co cemented carbide with a low content of cubic carbides and a rather low W-alloyed binder phase and a coating including an innermost layer of $TiC_xN_yO_z$ with columnar grains and a top layer of TiN and an inner layer of $\kappa-Al_2O_3$.

[0006] US 6,177,178 describes a coated milling insert particularly useful for milling in low and medium alloyed steels with or without raw surface zones during wet or dry conditions. The insert is characterized by a WC-Co cemented carbide with a low content of cubic carbides and a highly W-alloyed binder phase and a coating including an inner layer of $TiC_xN_yO_z$ with columnar grains, an inner layer of $\kappa-Al_2O_3$ and, preferably, a top layer of TiN.

[0007] US 6,250,855 provides a coated cemented carbide cutting tool for wet and dry milling of stainless steels at high cutting speeds. The tool has a cemented carbide body comprising a substrate based on WC-Co without any additions of cubic carbides. The coating includes a very thin layer of TiN, a second layer of (Ti,Al)N with a periodic variation of the Ti/Al ratio and an outermost layer of TiN.

[0008] WO 01/16389 discloses a coated milling insert particularly useful for milling in low and medium alloyed steels with or without abrasive surface zones during dry or wet conditions at high cutting speed, and milling hardened steels at high cutting speed. The insert is characterized by WC-Co cemented carbide with a low content of cubic carbides and a highly W-alloyed binder phase and a coating including an innermost layer of $TiC_xN_yO_z$ with columnar grains and a top layer of TiN and an inner layer of $\kappa-Al_2O_3$.

[0009] EP 1103635 provides a cutting tool insert particularly useful for wet and dry milling of low and medium alloyed steels and stainless steels as well as for turning of stainless steels. The cutting tool is comprised of a cobalt cemented carbide substrate with a multi-layer refractory coating thereon. The substrate has a cobalt content of 9.0-10.9 wt% and contains 1.0-2.0 wt% TaC/NbC. The coating consists of an MTCVD $TiC_xN_yO_z$ layer and a multi-layer coating being composed of $\kappa-Al_2O_3$ and $TiC_xN_yO_z$ layers.

[0010] It has now been found that enhanced cutting performance can be obtained by combining many different features of the cutting tool. Preferably for milling, the cutting insert has excellent performance at high cutting speeds in alloyed steels, tool steels and milling in hardened steels. At these cutting conditions, the cutting tool according to the invention displays improved properties with respect to many of the wear types mentioned earlier.

[0011] Fig 1 shows in 2500X magnification a coated cemented carbide substrate according to the present invention in which

1. Cemented carbide body.
2. An innermost layer of Ti_xAl_yN .
3. An outermost layer of TiN.

[0012] The cutting tool insert according to the present invention includes a cemented carbide substrate with a relatively low amount of cubic carbides, with a medium to highly W-alloyed binder phase and a fine to medium WC grain size. This substrate is provided with a wear resisting coating comprising a Ti_xAl_yN layer and an outer TiN layer.

[0013] According to the present invention, a coated cutting tool insert is provided with a cemented carbide body having a composition of 7.9-8.6 wt% Co, preferably 8.0-8.5 wt% Co, most preferably 8.1-8.4 wt% Co; 0.5-2.1 wt%, preferably 0.7-1.8 wt%, most preferably 0.9-1.5 wt% total amount of cubic carbides of the metals Ti, Nb and Ta and balance WC. Ti, Ta and/or Nb may also be replaced by other carbides of elements from groups IVb, Vb or VIb of the periodic table. The content of Ti is preferably on a level corresponding to a technical impurity. In a preferred embodiment, the ratio between the weight concentrations of Ta and Nb is within 1.0-12.0, preferably 1.5-11.4, most preferably 3.0-10.5.

[0014] The cobalt binder phase is medium to highly alloyed with tungsten. The content of W in the binder phase may be expressed as the S-value= $\sigma/16.1$, where σ is the measured magnetic moment of the binder phase in μTm^3kg^{-1} . The S-value depends on the content of tungsten in the binder phase and increases with a decreasing tungsten content. Thus, for pure cobalt, or a binder in a cemented carbide that is saturated with carbon, $S=1$ and for a binder phase that contains W in an amount that corresponds to the borderline to formation of η -phase, $S=0.78$.

[0015] It has now been found according to the present invention that improved cutting performance is achieved if the cemented carbide body has an S-value within the range 0.81-0.95, preferably 0.82-0.94, most preferably 0.85-0.92.

[0016] Furthermore, the mean intercept length of the tungsten carbide phase measured on a ground and polished representative cross section is in the range 0.4-0.9 μm , preferably 0.5-0.8 μm . The intercept length is measured by means of image analysis on micrographs with a magnification of 10000x and calculated as the average mean value of approximately 1000 intercept lengths.

[0017] The coating according to a preferred embodiment includes:

- at least one layer of Ti_xAl_yN , $0.8 < x+y < 1.2$, with $0.25 \leq x/y \leq 1.45$, preferably $0.33 \leq x/y \leq 1.1$, most preferably $0.42 \leq x/y \leq 0.79$ with a thickness of 0.5-7 μm , preferably 1-6 μm , most preferably 2-5 μm , with columnar grains.
- the outermost Ti_xAl_yN layer can be followed by a layer of TiN with a thickness of 0.1-2 μm , preferably 0.1-1.5 μm , most preferably 0.2-1 μm , but a Ti_xAl_yN layer can also be the outermost layer.

[0018] The present invention also relates to a method of making a coated cutting tool with a composition of 7.9-8.6 wt% Co, preferably 8.0-8.5 wt% Co, most preferably 8.1-8.4 wt% Co; 0.5-2.1 wt%, preferably 0.7-1.8 wt%, most preferably 0.9-1.5 wt% total amount of cubic carbides of the metals Ti, Nb and Ta and balance WC. Ti, Ta and/or Nb may also be replaced by other carbides of elements from groups IVb, Vb or VIb of the periodic table. The content of Ti is preferably on a level corresponding to a technical impurity. In a preferred embodiment, the ratio between the weight concentrations of Ta and Nb is within 1.0-12.0, preferably 1.5-11.4, most preferably 3.0-10.5.

[0019] The desired mean intercept length depends on the grain size of the starting powders and milling and sintering conditions and has to be determined by experiments. The desired S-value depends on the starting powders and sintering conditions and also has to be determined by experiments.

[0020] The coating layers are deposited using PVD technique preferably arc evaporation, with alloyed or composite Ti-Al metal targets.

[0021] The invention also relates to the use of cutting tool inserts according to above for dry milling at high cutting speeds in alloyed steels, tool steels and dry milling in hardened steels at cutting speeds of 50-350 m/min with mean chip thickness values of 0.03-0.18 mm, depending on cutting speed and insert geometry.

Example 1.

[0022] Grade A: A cemented carbide substrate in accordance with the invention with the composition 8.2 wt% Co, 1.2 wt% TaC, 0.2 wt% NbC and balance WC, with a binder phase alloyed with W corresponding to an S-value of 0.87 was produced by conventional milling of the powders, pressing of green compacts and subsequent sintering at 1430 °C. Investigation of the microstructure after sintering showed that the mean intercept length of the tungsten carbide phase was 0.7 μm . The substrate was coated in accordance with the invention in an arc evaporation system. Before coating the inserts were degreased in an ultrasonic cleaning line and in situ sputter cleaned with Ti and Ar ions. During deposition, the inserts were attached to a threefold rotating fixture which was negatively biased. Ti and alloyed Ti-Al metal targets were used and the deposition was made in a N_2 containing gas mixture. The temperature was kept at 500 °C during the one hour deposition cycle. Two subsequent layers were deposited during the same coating cycle,

EP 1 347 076 A1

a 3.4 μm thick $\text{Ti}_x\text{Al}_y\text{N}$ layer with $x/y=0.55$, followed by a 0.2 μm thick TiN layer. The thickness of the individual layers was measured on the flank face of the inserts using scanning electron microscopy (SEM) on cross-section specimens. The x/y metal ratio was determined using energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS) in the SEM. See Fig 1.

[0023] Grade B: A substrate with composition 10 wt% Co, 0.5 wt% Cr_3C_2 and balance WC, a binder phase alloyed with W corresponding to an S-value of 0.84, and a mean intercept length of WC in the sintered body of 0.4 μm was combined with a coating according to Grade A (according to the invention).

Operation	Face milling
Cutter diameter	100 mm
Work piece	Bar, 600 mm x 80 mm
Material	SS2244, 250 HB
Insert type	RPHT1204
Cutting speed	300 m/min
Feed	0.25 mm/tooth
Depth of cut	2.5 mm
Width of cut	80 mm
Coolant	No

Results	Tool life (min)
Grade A (grade according to invention)	16
Grade B (coating according to invention)	10

[0024] The tool life of Grade A was limited by flank wear. The tool life of Grade B was limited by plastic deformation followed by destruction of the cutting edge. This test shows that the combination of the substrate and coating according to the invention exhibits longer tool life than the coating in combination with a prior art substrate produced without addition of cubic carbides and with WC that yields a much finer mean intercept length in the sintered body.

Example 2:

[0025] Grade C: A substrate according to grade A (according to the invention). The substrate was CVD coated with four subsequent layers deposited during the same coating cycle. First a 0.3 μm thick $\text{TiC}_x\text{N}_y\text{O}_z$ layer with $z<0.1$ and approximately $x/y=0.1$, having equiaxed grains. The second layer was 3.1 μm of columnar $\text{TiC}_x\text{N}_y\text{O}_z$ deposited at 835-850°C using MTCVD technique, yielding an approximated carbon to nitrogen ratio $x/y=1.5$ with $z<0.1$. The third layer was a 1.5 μm thick layer of Al_2O_3 deposited at approximately 1000°C and consisting essentially of the K-phase. Finally a layer of equiaxed nitrogen rich $\text{TiC}_x\text{N}_y\text{O}_z$ with $z<0.1$ and $y>0.8$ was deposited to a thickness of 0.3 μm .

Operation	Copy milling
Cutter diameter	35 mm
Work piece	Bar, 350 mm x 270 mm
Material	SS2314, 40 HRC
Insert type	RPHT1204
Cutting speed	200 m/min
Feed	0.2 mm/tooth
Number of teeth	3
Depth of cut	2mm
Width of cut	5-32 mm

(continued)

Operation	Copy milling
Coolant	No

Results	Tool life (min)
Grade A (grade according to invention)	40
Grade C (substrate according to invention)	25

[0026] The tool life of both grades was limited by edge chipping. The tool life of Grade C was significantly reduced by adhesive wear leading to pick out of the coating and premature edge chipping. This test shows that the combination of the substrate and coating according to the invention exhibits longer tool life than the substrate in combination with a thicker prior art CVD coating.

Example 3:

[0027] Grade D: A substrate according to grade A (according to the invention). The substrate was coated using PVD technique with two subsequent layers deposited during the same coating cycle: a 3.2 μm thick $\text{Ti}_x\text{Al}_y\text{N}$ layer with $x/y=1.63$ followed by a 0.2 μm thick TiN layer.

Operation	Face milling
Cutter diameter	100 mm
Work piece	Bar, 75 mm x 600 mm
Material	SS2244, 250 HB
Insert type	SEKN1203
Cutting speed	250 m/min
Feed	0.25 mm/tooth
Depth of cut	2.5 mm
Width of cut	75 mm
Coolant	No

Results	Tool life (min)
Grade A (grade according to invention)	21
Grade D (prior art)	15

[0028] The tool life was limited by flank wear. The better tool life of Grade D was the consequence of the more wear resistant coating according to the invention.

Example 4:

[0029] Grade E: A commercial cemented carbide cutting insert with composition 9.4 wt% Co, 7.2 wt% TaC, 0.1 wt% NbC, 3.4 wt% TiC and balance WC. The binder phase was alloyed with W corresponding to an S-value of 0.85, and the mean intercept length of the WC was 0.7 μm . The insert was coated with a 1.5 μm (measured on the flank face) thick $\text{Ti}_x\text{Al}_y\text{N}$ layer with an elemental ratio $x/y=1.2$.

Operation	Copy milling
Cutter diameter	35 mm

(continued)

Operation	Copy milling
Work piece	Bar, 350 mm x 270 mm
Material	SS2242, 38 HRC
Insert type	RPHT1204
Cutting speed	200 m/min
Feed	0.22 mm/tooth
Number of teeth	3
Depth of cut	2 mm
Width of cut	5-32 mm
Coolant	No

Results	Tool life (min)
Grade A (grade according to invention)	56
Grade E (prior art)	41

[0030] The tool life was limited by flank wear and edge chipping. The shorter tool life of Grade E shows the negative effect of high cubic carbide content on cutting edge strength and edge chipping resistance.

Claims

1. A cutting tool insert, comprising a cemented carbide body and a coating particularly useful in milling at high cutting speeds in alloyed steels, tool steels and milling in hardened steels **characterized by** a composition of the cemented carbide body of 7.9-8.6 wt% Co, preferably 8.0-8.5 wt% Co, 0.5-2.1 wt%, preferably 0.7-1.8 wt%, total amount of cubic carbides of the metals Ta and Nb, the ratio between the weight concentrations of Ta and Nb being within 1.0-12.0, preferably 1.5-11.4, and balance WC with a mean intercept length in the range 0.4-0.9 μm , preferably 0.5-0.8 μm , the binder phase being alloyed with W corresponding to an S-value within the range 0.81-0.95, preferably 0.82-0.94 and that said coating comprises a layer of $\text{Ti}_x\text{Al}_y\text{N}$, $0.8 \leq x+y \leq 1.2$, with $0.25 \leq x/y \leq 1.45$, preferably $0.33 \leq x/y \leq 1.1$, with a thickness of 0.5-7 μm , preferably 1-6 μm , with columnar grains.
2. A cutting tool insert according to claim 1 **characterized in** a coating consisting of one layer of $\text{Ti}_x\text{Al}_y\text{N}$ with $0.8 \leq x+y \leq 1.2$ and $0.42 \leq x/y \leq 0.79$.
3. A cutting tool according to the preceding claims **characterized in** further comprising an outer layer of TiN with a thickness of 0.1-2 μm , preferably 0.1-1.5 μm .
4. A method of making a cutting tool insert, comprising a cemented carbide body and a coating particularly useful in milling at high cutting speeds in low and medium alloyed steels and milling in hardened steels **characterized in** depositing on a cemented carbide with a composition of 7.9-8.6 wt% Co, preferably 8.0-8.5 wt% Co, 0.5-2.1 wt%, preferably 0.7-1.8 wt%, total amount of cubic carbides of the metals Ta and Nb, the ratio between the weight concentrations of Ta and Nb being within 1.0-12.0, preferably 1.5-11.4, and balance WC with a mean intercept length in the range 0.4-0.9 μm , preferably 0.5-0.8 μm , the binder phase being alloyed with W corresponding to an S-value within the range 0.81-0.95, preferably 0.82-0.94 a coating comprising a layer of $\text{Ti}_x\text{Al}_y\text{N}$ with $0.25 \leq x/y \leq 1.45$, preferably $0.33 \leq x/y \leq 1.1$, with a thickness of 0.5-7 μm , preferably 1-6 μm , with columnar grains using PVD-technique, preferably arc evaporation.
5. The method of claim 4 **characterized in** depositing $\text{Ti}_x\text{Al}_y\text{N}$ with $0.8 \leq x+y \leq 1.2$ and $0.42 \leq x/y \leq 0.79$ using known PVD-technique.

EP 1 347 076 A1

6. The method of claims 4-5 **characterized in** depositing an outer layer of TiN with thickness of 0.1-2 μm , preferably 0.1-1.5 μm using known PVD-technique.
7. Use of a cutting tool insert according to claims 1-6 for dry milling at high cutting speeds in alloyed steels, tool steels and dry milling in hardened steels at cutting speeds of 50-350 m/min at mean chip thickness values of 0.03-0.18 mm, depending on cutting speed and insert geometry.

5

10

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

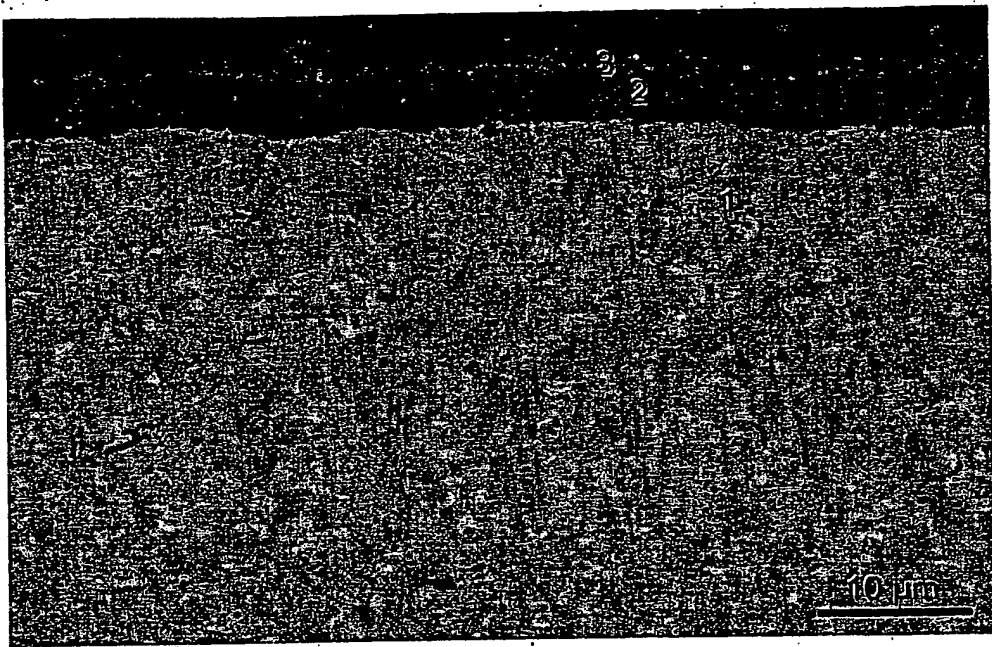


FIG .1



European Patent
Office

PARTIAL EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

which under Rule 45 of the European Patent Convention shall be considered, for the purposes of subsequent proceedings, as the European search report

EP 03 00 5967

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
A	EP 1 038 989 A (SANDVIK AB) 27 September 2000 (2000-09-27) * the whole document *	1-7	C23C14/14 C23C14/06 B23B27/14 C22C29/06 C23C16/34 C23C30/00
A	WO 01 16388 A (SANDVIK AB) 8 March 2001 (2001-03-08) * the whole document *	1-7	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 2000, no. 25, 12 April 2001 (2001-04-12) -& JP 2001 234328 A (TOSHIBA TUNGALOY CO LTD), 31 August 2001 (2001-08-31) * abstract; tables 2,4 *	1-7	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 1998, no. 11, 30 September 1998 (1998-09-30) -& JP 10 152768 A (MITSUBISHI MATERIALS CORP), 9 June 1998 (1998-06-09) * abstract; tables 2,3 *	1-7	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
			C23C B23B C22C
INCOMPLETE SEARCH <p>The Search Division considers that the present application, or one or more of its claims, does/do not comply with the EPC to such an extent that a meaningful search into the state of the art cannot be carried out, or can only be carried out partially, for these claims.</p> <p>Claims searched completely :</p> <p>Claims searched incompletely :</p> <p>Claims not searched :</p> <p>Reason for the limitation of the search:</p> <p>see sheet C</p>			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 17 June 2003	Examiner Castagné, C
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons</p> <p>& : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

EPO FORM 1503 03/02 (P04007)



European Patent
Office

INCOMPLETE SEARCH
SHEET C

Application Number
EP 03 00 5967

Claim(s) searched incompletely:
1-7

Reason for the limitation of the search:

Present claims 1 and 4 relate respectively to a product and a method both defined (inter alia)

by reference to the following parameters :

P1: Mean intercept length

P2: S-value

The use of these parameters in the present context is considered to lead to a lack of clarity within the meaning of Article 84 EPC. It is impossible to compare the parameters the applicant has chosen to employ with what is set out in the prior art, even with their definition in the page 3 of the description.

The lack of clarity is such as to render a meaningful complete search impossible. Consequently, the search has been restricted to the parts of those claims relating to the defined composition of the cemented carbide substrate and to its defined layer of TiAlN.



**European Patent
Office**

PARTIAL EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 03 00 5967

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 018, no. 145 (C-1178), 10 March 1994 (1994-03-10) -& JP 05 320913 A (MITSUBISHI MATERIALS CORP), 7 December 1993 (1993-12-07) * abstract; tables 2-4 *	1-7	
P,A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 2002, no. 09, 4 September 2002 (2002-09-04) -& JP 2002 126913 A (TOSHIBA TUNGALOY CO LTD), 8 May 2002 (2002-05-08) * abstract *	1-7	
P,A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 2003, no. 04, 2 April 2003 (2003-04-02) -& JP 2002 356734 A (KYOCERA CORP), 13 December 2002 (2002-12-13) * abstract *	1-7	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 03 00 5967

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

17-06-2003

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
EP 1038989 A	27-09-2000	SE 519005 C2	17-12-2002
		EP 1038989 A2	27-09-2000
		JP 2000308916 A	07-11-2000
		SE 9901149 A	27-09-2000
		US 6250855 B1	26-06-2001
WO 0116388 A	08-03-2001	EP 1218557 A1	03-07-2002
		JP 2003508242 T	04-03-2003
		WO 0116388 A1	08-03-2001
		US 6342291 B1	29-01-2002
		US 2002051887 A1	02-05-2002
JP 2001234328 A	31-08-2001	NONE	
JP 10152768 8 A		NONE	
JP 05320913 8 A		NONE	
JP 2002126913 A	08-05-2002	NONE	
JP 2002356734 A	13-12-2002	NONE	

EPC FORM P0459

For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82

**This Page is Inserted by IFW Indexing and Scanning
Operations and is not part of the Official Record**

BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images include but are not limited to the items checked:

- ☐ **BLACK BORDERS**
- ☐ **IMAGE CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES**
- ☐ **FADED TEXT OR DRAWING**
- ☐ **BLURRED OR ILLEGIBLE TEXT OR DRAWING**
- ☐ **SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES**
- ☐ **COLOR OR BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS**
- ☐ **GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS**
- ☐ **LINES OR MARKS ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT**
- ☐ **REFERENCE(S) OR EXHIBIT(S) SUBMITTED ARE POOR QUALITY**
- ☐ **OTHER:** _____

IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.

As rescanning these documents will not correct the image problems checked, please do not report these problems to the IFW Image Problem Mailbox.

THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)